

REMARKS

I. Status of Claims

Claims 9, 11, and 16-17 are pending in the application and are currently amended. Claims 11, 16, and 17 are independent. Claims 2-8, 10, 12-15, and 18 are canceled without prejudice to and/or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. The Applicants reserve the right to file one or more divisional application(s) directed to the non-elected subject matter in accordance with the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 121.

The Office Action rejected claims 2 and 18 under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Tinney (USP 6,209,508) in view of Hankins et al. (USP 6,446,612) and claims 9 and 10 under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Tinney and Hankins et al., as applied to claim 2, and further in view of Taylor (USP 4,787,348). Claims 11, 16 and 17 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of these rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

II. Information Disclosure Statement

Since another Information Disclosure Statement has been submitted in compliance with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(2), the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of FR 834 339.

III. Allowable Subject Matter

As stated above, claims 11, 16 and 17 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

IV. Claims 11, 16, and 17

The Applicant respectfully submits that claims 11, 16, and 17 are amended to include all of the limitations of their base claims and intervening claims. Therefore, for at least these reasons, the Applicant respectfully submits that claims 11, 16, and 17, as well as dependent claim 9, are patentable over the cited references.

V. Conclusion

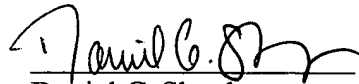
In light of the above discussion, the Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4420 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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